

**Subject: Bill# 5283**

I can go on and on about how important the Agriscience program is and how it helped me achieve my goals and become the business owner I am today, but I am just going to touch on a few. My name is Justine Ramsey and I am the owner of Floral Designs by Justine, a weddings and events Florist in Bethlehem. I started my career when I was 14 in the Agriscience program. Yes, you heard me right 14! I found my love for Floral Design and plants Freshman year. Ironically, I applied to the program for the animals, but since you get to experience all the courses offered Freshman year, I fell in love with plants and flowers while taking that class which turned into my career. The hands on experience you get as an FFA member is truly incredible. Hands-on work inside and out of the classroom. Having to get a job and keep track of my hours, money, and goals has helped me grow a successful business starting at the age of 22. The FFA program will have an everlasting effect on every single student that goes through the program. As a local business owner I now hire FFA students as much as possible and am always amazed at their skills, impressed with their want to work and learn, and ability to speak and make decisions. That is truly all do to the FFA teachers, the classroom work, and their fellow hardworking FFA peers. Without the state funding some students will not get the opportunities to take the next step in their future careers, some may not be able to start their own business right out of high school or college. Some will never experience how incredible the FFA program is. In the end, we will ALWAYS need plants and animals to live.

Thank you for your time,

Justine Ramsey

FFA Alumni 2010

UConn CAHNR Alumni 2014

Owner of Floral Designs by Justine

UConn Floral Arts Professor